Department of Education

Safe & Caring Schools
Provincial Action Plan

As partners in the *Violence Prevention Initiative*, the Department of Education is c nmitted to being proactive in addressing issues of violence in our schools, and to the development of safe & caring learning environments. To assist in achieving these goals, the department began the implementation of a Safe & Caring Schools Initiative in the fall of 2001.

To address concerns around the issue of bullying in schools, the department sponsored a Provincial Forum on School Bullying in May 2002. Community partners, students, parents, as well as representatives from all school boards participated in this forum. The forum consultations and follow-up consultations with school district personnel in October 2002, have resulted in a province wide commitment to this Safe & Caring Schools Action Plan.

This implementation of this action plan will be monitored by the Safe & Caring Schools Advisory Group, consisting of key community and education partners.

The elements of the action plan are as follows:

Policy:

- The department's resource *Policy, Guidelines and Resource Guide on Discipline, Violence and Safe Schools Teams*, which guides school and district planning in this area, will be redistributed to all districts and is posted on the Safe & Caring Schools web site.

- In accordance with Article 29.06 of the NLTA collective agreement, districts are expected to have Safe & Caring Schools Policies developed and implemented by April 2003. These district policies will be submitted to the Department of Education.

- The department will examine the Safe & Caring Schools Policies that exist in other provinces with a view to developing a provincial policy for Newfoundland and Labrador by Spring 2003.

Public Awareness:

- The department will increase public awareness through the Student Support Services Newsletter and the department's web site (http://www.gov.nf.ca/edu/dept/safesch.htm).

- The department will link district web sites to the Safe & Caring Schools web site.

- The department will develop a brochure for students and parents that describes the Safe & Caring Schools Initiative.

- The department will use various means to increase public awareness (e.g., Violence Prevention Initiative, NLTA Bulletin, NLFSC Newsletter, CEC Today, media clips, community television, media courses in schools that target this issue for student projects, publicity campaign, etc.).

Resource Provisions:

- The department will provide a comprehensive bullying prevention program to every school. Schools may choose to implement this program or use it as a supplementary resource to another program already implemented. The British Columbia resources, *Focus on Bullying: A Prevention Program for Elementary School Communities* and *Focus on Harassment and Intimidation: Responding to Bullying in Secondary School Communities*, have been reviewed by school district personnel and approved for purchase. These resources will be correlated with the provincial curriculum before they are distributed to schools. The department will also prepare a professional development package to accompany the resource. These resources provide practical ideas, activities and strategies, including a series of skill-building lesson plans, linked to the provincial curriculum, that actively engage students in discussions about bullying and in devising solutions to stop bullying.

- The department will provide all primary schools with copies of *Trevor and the Bully* which was published by the Grand Falls-Windsor Committee Against Violence. This will include a large read-a-loud book for teachers and several small books for students to share with parents.

- The department has been working in partnership with the other Atlantic provinces in developing an Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF) teacher resource and professional development package entitled, *Meeting Behavioural Challenges: Creating Safe and Caring Learning Environments.* This resource will be available to schools throughout the Atlantic provinces in 2003.

- Department resources such as *Classroom Perspectives: Teachers Make A Difference* and *Balancing Students' Rights & Responsibilities,* will be reprinted and redistributed to districts/schools.

- The department will provide districts with *Cooperative Discipline* materials (videos & teacher guides) to be used when inservicing school personnel to this program.

- The department will compile a list of existing resources such as violence prevention programs, posters, books and videos to be shared with districts/schools for use with students. The department will explore ways that these could be used to develop teaching modules or for curriculum integration.

- The department will develop tools to measure/track the progress/success of this initiative (e.g., pre & post tests).

Professional Development:

- The department has developed a two-day inservice based on *Meeting Behavioural Challenges: Creating Safe and Caring Learning Environments* which is available to districts.

- *Meeting Behavioural Challenges: Creating Safe and Caring Learning Environments* was offered as a two-day summer institute in August 2002 and will be available again this summer.

- The department will develop a complimentary professional development package to accompany the British Columbia bullying resources.

- The department, in partnership with the NLTA, will organize Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) training for districts in May 2003.

- The department will provide more training in *Cooperative Discipline* during 2003.

Funding:

- The Department of Education will continue to provide support to school districts to assist in resource provision, professional development, committee meetings, and forums for discussion and problem solving.

- With its community partners, the department will connect with other funding sources to avail of additional funds for schools, districts and communities to foster the development and delivery of quality violence prevention programming.

Youth Involvement:

- The department, in partnership with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils (NLFSC) will ensure more active involvement of youth in promoting safe and caring schools (e.g., a student web site, peer mentor-students talking to students, leadership conferences or awareness forums, and music, posters or drama contests, etc.).

Parental & Community Partnerships:

- The department will support parental and community partnerships. Meetings with provincial partners will be ongoing.